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WAR: ITS CAUSE AND CURE

THE present war was an inevitability. It was merely a question of time. Germany has been growing and growing in economic power for forty years or more, ever since Sedan. Her development began after the other nations had appropriated most of the earth's surface, and it was but natural and inevitable that she should feel she was entitled to a more equitable share. The mere matter of her not having grown up enough to have sat at the table when the pie was first cut should not constitute a permanent bar to her "having a place in the sun."

Like the Syndicalists who have no faith in "voting," she very sensibly arrived at the conclusion long ago that "diplomacy" would never give her any such place and that "force" was the only way. The natural corollary was to build up a war machine. The machine was built, and she has long been waiting for a good opportunity to use it. Last summer seemed opportune. She thought Russia, weakened by the Japanese war, and England, with her small standing army, would be unable to give France much help, so, making an excuse of the Servian situation, the Kaiser attacked France. Paris was to be taken in three weeks, and then Russia was to be battered up in the following two months. France was to sue for peace, which would be graciously granted her upon the payment of a crushing indemnity and the ceding of enough of her coast line along the English channel to include Calais, from which port England would be invaded and the British Empire crumpled up. Canada would thus naturally fall to Germany, and the next step in the evolution of the German Empire would no doubt have been the annexation of the United States, and other such trifles.

With France, Japan, Russia and England disposed of, the United States would be in no position to resist Germany.

However, all this dream of world domination has been shattered. The valorous resistance of the Belgians at Liege gave the British time to land an expeditionary force to help the French resist the German attack on Paris. The unexpected improved quality of the Russian army has forced the Kaiser to divert half his army to his eastern frontier. Instead of Germany conquering Europe, it now looks as if German defeat were inevitable. The fight is by no means over, however, and there will be many a good man made into a corpse before Armageddon is decided.

When the war first broke out last summer, the attitude of the ordinary American was to take no sides, but calmly await the profits which were thought would surely begin soon to flow to America. However, as the war continued and the expected profits showed no apparent inclination to materialize, and, in fact, on the contrary, immense losses were encountered by producers of cotton and copper and other commodities which could find no market, the American began to take more interest in the genesis of an affair which did him so much ill. When a man is well he doesn't look about for the cause of his good health with anything like the interest he displays in looking after the cause of his ill health when he is not well.

It was not long before most Americans saw clearly enough that the war had been brought on by Germany in order to take her place in the sun. The American is a strong believer in the right of the existing proprietor to hold to his possessions, no matter how he happened to be the *de facto* proprietor, hence he has no sympathy with the German plea of right being merely a question of might. Anti-German sentiment in America began to grow and is still growing rapidly. For not only is the American opposed to the general idea of the strong taking what he has the power to take, but he also has a particular objection to an autocracy like Germany doing the taking. The American is still democratic enough to dislike an autocracy.

From the point of view of abstract justice, the Germans are quite right in their contention that theirs is a nation of such strength, size and wealth that it should have corresponding colonial possessions. But abstract justice doesn't reign in this world—not yet, anyway. If it did we Americans would hardly consent to allow a few millionaires to own America, making the rest of us pay tribute. If we had the grit and determination of the Kaiser, we would demand a place in the American Sun for Americans. But that is another story.

There is no country in the world today where the freedom of the individual is so completely and scientifically curtailed for the benefit of the state as in Germany. If the individual's freedom were limited in order that the state might devote itself to the betterment of its people, there would be justification of a sort, but when freedom is given up simply to build up a military despotism, aiming at bringing all the world under its Prussian heel, we can see nothing but evil in it. True, all despotisms attempt to crush the individual for the benefit of the state—Russia, for instance. But the great difference between Russia and Germany is that in the case of Germany the state is under the control of a highly educated and scientific body of men, and the individual has no chance of escape, no more than a mouse from a cat on a bare floor. Whereas in Russia the state is such a clumsy affair and so badly managed that it is as if the mouse were chased by an elephant. On paper the individual German has more liberty than the Russian; in reality there is no comparison.

It is the very "kultur" and science which the Germans so freely offer to their Kaiser in the organization of their state which constitute the menace to the world. If Germany were to emerge victor in the present war, there is a logical danger of the Prussianization of the world. The Kaiser has among his German subjects the brains and the organization to make a world empire. On the other hand, Russia, with her vast hordes of uneducated, barbaric subjects, has quite enough to do to govern her own extended empire, with no thought of any further extension, unless it may be the finding of a natural trade outlet at Constantinople on the Mediterranean. To think of Russia dominating and governing France and England, levying permanent tribute on them, is an impossible conception. Russia has no science and culture

competent for such a task. Germany, once in the saddle, not only could dominate Europe but also if she wins this war she will certainly prove her capacity to levy tribute on her foes.

However, we are now dealing with present problems rather than future ones. No one can well say that there is today any menace to the world from Russia, whereas the German menace is a very real and pertinent one. We can take care of Russia when the time comes; in the meanwhile our attention must be given to Germany.

Germany's power and competency to govern the world is the very reason why those who treasure the present measure of freedom seen in such democratic countries as England, France and the United States are terrified at the thought of German domination. If Germany were incompetent to take such full advantage of a victory, the United States would have no cause to fear; but Germany is competent and has the will, and therefore we fear her.

It is sometimes said that Capitalism is the same under every government, and that to the mass of the people it is a matter of indifference whether they live under the autocracy of the Kaiser or the Republic of the United States, for in any event they must give up practically all they produce to the capitalist and landlord. It is true that under capitalism the condition of the worker is no reflex of his political freedom, but on the other hand, however much this may be true, it is not open to dispute that a nation must first be free of external domination by another nation before it can hope for any considerable internal development of either political or industrial freedom.

With Germany victorious we would see the Kaiser actually making France and England raise the money to pay standing armies to hold themselves as his vassals. This has been the past history of conquests by despots, and we have no reason to assume that it would not occur again. In fact, right now Belgium is being forced to pay tribute to the Kaiser for its own subjugation. And if such a condition did come about, it is obvious that there could be no labor movement of any consequence in France or England during the period of their servitude. In the first place, Germany would allow no labor organizations to exist in England or France, and, secondly, labor would be so much occupied with plans to oust the foreigner that it could give no attention to what are now its immediate concerns.

On the other hand, if the allies are victorious—and I think there can be no question that this will be the ultimate—there will be a great advance in political democracy and freedom of the individual throughout Europe. Germany will be forced to disarm permanently, and this disarmament will allow France to disband her huge army which has been made necessary by Germany's menace, and England could cease her huge expenditure on her fleet. Even the United States may be released from her heavy military expenditure if arrangements can be made by which she is released from fear of Japan.

As a matter of fact, although it is not generally recognized, the United States has almost as great an interest in the defeat of Germany as has England. If Germany defeats the allies, it is but a short time before she must and will invade England, and if the invasion is successful it will be but a question of time when she will cross swords with us, for the United States will be the only power left between her and world dominion.

The very first effect of German victory over the allies would demonstrate the obvious necessity of the United States building a navy competent to meet the German navy and to raise a standing army sufficient to render the country safe from German invasion. Germany would annex Canada as the result of defeating England—the Monroe doctrine would be another scrap of paper—and the United States would have to build a line of forts from Maine to Oregon and keep a standing army of two million men on the border line.

Hence we Americans, by pursuing a policy of neutrality, are merely standing aside and allowing France and England and little Belgium to fight our battle for us. If we really wish to end the war and save the hundreds of thousands of lives which will be lost by its continuance, then there is no quicker way than for America to throw herself unreservedly with the allies against Germany.

I am not advocating America joining with the allies against Germany through any animosity against the Germans as individuals, but because of my repugnance to the feudal autocracy which her victory would surely impose upon the rest of the world, America included. If Americans wish to retain their present liberties, then the time to strike for them is now, when they will have the help of France, Russia and England. If America waits until the danger may become more real to her through the extremely unlikely but yet barely possible defeat of the allies, she would then have to fight her battle unaided against the German autocracy, and as things are today, America is no match for the German war machine.

However, I have little or no hope that America will depart from the foolish, cowardly policy set out for her by her politicians. But at least I shall have had the satisfaction of having delivered myself of my own opinion upon a very vital subject. As for America not having any cause for intervening, I would say that if some technical excuse were desired for entering into the struggle for liberty, the violation of the neutrality of Belgium by Germany is quite sufficient.

This war has enlightened Socialists as to the futility of the merely political Socialist movement. The German Socialist party cast four and a quarter million votes at the last election. These votes were presumably cast by men who were for peace at any cost, for the fundamental plank of the Socialist party, not only of Germany but of all the world, is: "Workers of the world, unite; you have a world to gain and your chains to lose." Now, certainly, with such a formula ingrained into the four and a quarter million German voters, we would have hardly thought that practically every last one of them would have impetuously rushed to the attack on France at the crack of the Kaiser's whip. It is no answer to say that the French Socialists were just as eager to repel Germany's attack, because this simply is further evidence that a mere Socialist political organization has no real influence over the activities of its members; and, anyway, the justification of repelling an attack is far greater than for the making of the original attack.

Today the state everywhere is the central and supreme organization uniting man to his fellow men, and as long as it holds this supremacy we may be sure that man will give up his life to preserve the state if he feels its life is threatened. Patriotism is today just as much, therefore, a fundamental instinct among men as is the instinct to protect the body at the expense of the parts. Neither Pacifists nor Socialists can be blamed for forgetting their Socialism and remembering their patriotism. I myself never expected anything different. In Wilshire's Magazine for July, 1913, for instance, I said that men could no more refrain from acting on their patriotic feelings than could the heliotropic crustaceans in Professor Jacques Loeb's jar refrain from heading to the sun. I added that it was all buncombe for the British Labor Pacifists to orate against war, because, "let but one German bomb drop in England, and the man who talks peace will be lucky if he escapes hanging at the nearest lamppost." With the state supreme, patriotism is inevitable, and the mere fact of the workers not owning property and having no stake in their country is not in the least any guard against their being just as patriotic as the rich. As a matter of fact,

the poor are always the first to offer to go to the front, and this, too, without any economic compulsion.

Nor can we rely upon taking a popular vote before we decide to wage war, because the voters may be so obsessed with the patriotic feeling that their vote will not bear any direct relation to their real interests. No doubt, if Germany had taken a popular vote before the war, the Kaiser would have had a huge majority back of him.

The rich are, in the very nature of things, bound to control the modern state, and involved in the control of the state is the control of that feeling called patriotism, which impels the people to support the state, right or wrong. Hence all plans to prevent war by any plan of referring declarations of war back to the popular vote are futile. And, anyway, as long as a nation is in danger from another nation, she cannot wait for the taking of a popular vote if attacked. Delay might be fatal.

It has been suggested that a general strike would prevent war. This is perfectly true, if it were possible to call such a strike with conditions as they are now. But it is impossible. In the first place, it is obvious that the strike must be equally effective in both belligerent countries, otherwise the country in which it was most effective would simply be laying itself wide open to the invading armies of the enemy. It would manifestly be asking altogether too much of human nature, with its coals of patriotism always ready to flare up, to go on a strike which would cause one's country to fall under the domination of another nation.

But the main reason why a general strike would be ineffective is because man must attach himself to some central organization, and a general strike today is simply a negation, and no man can swear fealty to a negation. The general strike as a preventive of war is as futile as are the International Peace Conferences held in Carnegie's Peace Palace at The Hague, and certainly every sane man today must recognize the futility of the Carnegie plan.

Nor is secret diplomacy to blame. In war you must adopt all the weapons and means of preventing your enemy knowing your plans; in other words, "secret diplomacy" is most imperative. Would France have been safer from attack if Germany had known her plans of defense? There is but one way to insure the world against war, and that is to make patriotism at one and the same time unnecessary and impossible. The present state is based upon an organization of certain individuals who happen to live in a certain geographical part of the earth's surface. This relationship of the individual to the state is such that the individual has little or no control over the state, whereas the state has a very great control over him. He may have a vote, but even so, the control he may exert is not materially enhanced. The individual can only exert any effective control over the state through the property interests under his control. This practically means that the rich control the modern state. The only time the workers ever exert any real control over the state is in those rare and exceptional intervals when, by combination, they combine and withhold their labor from certain vital industries, and at such a critical period as to force the capitalists to react upon the state. But this is a most uncertain and transitory method of control, and the frequent exercise of it would surely lead to such measures on the part of the capitalists as would either tend to make its continued use next to impossible or would lead to a social revolution. The capitalists are quite right in declaring that such control by the workers is a menace to the very life of the state, and therefore they must go to any extreme to prevent it.

However, the workers, having once had a taste of the supreme power which lies potentially within themselves, will never be deterred by capitalist activities from organizing industrial unions of such power as, when combined, will create the basis for a society.

In this society of the future the individual's fealty to it will be led up through perfectly natural gradations, from his immediate industrial union up through the various federations of such unions to society as a whole. As his fealty to the new society develops, his fealty, his patriotism to the state, will fade. His relationship to the new society will be so perfectly natural and automatic that he will respond as instinctively to its needs, and it to his needs, as do the cells of the body respond to the needs of the body and, vice versa, the body respond to the cells. There will be no class rule, neither a dominant capitalist class as is seen in America, nor a dominant feudal military caste riding the capitalist class, as is seen in Germany.

War between nations of the new society will naturally cease, inasmuch as there will be no private interests desirous of war, and especially because the workers will be in such complete and instinctive control of society that a war would be as impossible as for a sane man to intentionally mutilate himself.

War cannot be ended until we end the state (this is the Syndicalist position), and we cannot end the state until we have developed another organization ready at hand to take its place. The Syndicalist finds the nucleus of this new organization in the new spirit federating and inspiring the labor unions of the world. But he declares that until we have prepared the way for the further development of such a spirit by freeing man from fear of the world-wide military despotism foreshadowed by the activities and growth of the German autocracy, we cannot hope for progress.

The Syndicalist, more than any man, is for peace, but he is not for peace at the expense of his liberty, nor is he one of those who would stand by as a neutral and allow others to battle for his freedom. Fight your own battles, says the Syndicalist, be it by rifles or by strikes. Those who would be free must exercise eternal vigilance. The man who fails to have a keen enough outlook to see the menace to the world's present small measure of liberty in the growth of the German autocracy is wanting in that eternal vigilance which is the price of the flower of freedom.

The annihilation of the German military organization will not mean any sudden transfer of power from the capitalists of the world to the workers, but it will mean the preparation of the soil wherein Revolutionary Industrial Unionism will find an opportunity for growth, development and final fruition.

THE FUTURE OF THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

By Gaylord Wilshire in the San Francisco Bulletin

That the Socialist movement of Europe has been eclipsed by the war is obvious. The question one asks now is, What of the future after the war? Will we see the hosts of labor patiently building up the movement again until they once again can boast of polling over four million votes in Germany and nearly half as many in France, not to mention the smaller votes in other countries? I doubt it. We were told before the war that the Socialist movement had already made war an impossibility. It was impossible to conceive of France and Germany going to war with each other, when for years the International Socialist Conference had been held, with both countries sending delegates thereto, embracing each other with loving arms and swearing that nothing would ever induce them to take up arms against each other. Yet at the first breath of a disagreement between the governments of Germany and France we find these erstwhile Socialist brothers only too anxious to kill each other to show their devotion to their respective fatherlands. The dream of a political Socialist party preventing international war has collapsed.

And if it cannot prevent war it has no utility as a revolutionary weapon, because whenever it may be thought to have become dangerous to a government the remedy is at hand—stir up a quarrel with your next-door nation and you have killed Socialism.

The ballot is merely the contemptible "scrap of paper" which the Kaiser called the treaty which was supposed to protect the neutrality of Belgium.

As long as it was not to the interest of the Kaiser to violate the treaty obligations, he did not violate them, but the moment he found it to his interest to violate and he thought he had the power to violate, he violated. I am not criticising the Kaiser for the violation, because he merely has done what always has been done in the past and always will be done in the future by those who have the power to break their oaths for their own interest. It is not a peculiar failing of kings to break treaty obligations. A labor union will break its treaty with employers just as quickly as did the Kaiser, if it sees it has the power and has the interest to break it.

A Roosevelt will take his seat in the presidential chair after swearing to honor and protect the constitution, and yet when it comes to such a trivial thing as a case like that of illegally imprisoning the men for passing Confederate bills as greenbacks, he will boast of disregarding their constitutional rights in imprisoning them.

And a state legislature in Colorado, sworn to obey the state constitution, will disregard with equal alacrity the majority referendum vote of the people demanding an eight-hour bill.

It's all a question of the desire for a thing and the power to take it with impunity. Labor at present in most countries has the "right to vote itself the property of the rich," and the assumption of the Socialist party is that as soon as it becomes intelligent enough to so vote, it will immediately be given what it votes for. Passing by the question of whether it could, through the machinery of a political modern state, successfully operate the machinery after it may have had it handed over by the capitalist class, we must ask ourselves if the capitalist class would ever respect its treaty obligations and bow to the desire of a majority vote. The assumption is that a majority, merely because it is a majority, is more powerful than the minority, and that therefore the minority, recognizing its defeat to be inevitable in a physical contest, will gracefully surrender.

This would be true enough if the minority did not know that in measuring up the power of men for a physical contest, mere numbers are not by any means the only factor of strength.

When we see a hundred policemen disperse a mob of a thousand, we have a concrete illustration of the illusion of the power of the majority. We here in America have been so accustomed to see the minority acquiesce to the expressed wish of a political majority that it is almost impossible for us to realize any other sequence of events. True, we had the lesson of the attitude of the South when something really vital—slavery—to a section of the capitalist class was attacked, but as the majority of the nation finally triumphed we have considered that this incident merely confirmed the soundness of our faith in the power of the majority. We have taken the Civil War as a token that never again will a minority contest the will of the majority.

We neglect to consider that what really beat the South was not so much the superior numbers of the North, as the superior dollars of the North.

If by any chance the Progressives of America should come into political power and develop a strong Socialist policy, which would really threaten the ownership of wealth by the capitalists as a whole, I see no more chance of the capitalists calmly surrendering their dollars than did the South calmly and peacefully surrender its slaves. And, furthermore, if the Progressive threat was not merely against the big capitalists, but against all capitalists, both big and little, we would see the whole of the capitalist class rally with united front, and under their banner we would see the flower of the working class, just as we today see the flower of the Socialists under the banner of the Kaiser. The Progressives might have a numerical majority of the voters, but they would have all the dollars against them and a huge minority of the voters as well, for we cannot hope that all the workers will be made into revolutionists by any mere political propaganda.

There will always be a big conservative minority ready to lick the hand of the masters, exactly as the great majority of the negroes worked and fought for their masters during the Civil War, although they knew that they merely had to desert to the North in order to become free men. Men are far more slaves to custom and instinct than we believe, whether they be white or black.

The future social revolution is to be an industrial revolution, not a political revolution, nor a military revolution. Therefore it demands neither political nor military weapons to give power to the working class to bring it about. It requires industrial power, industrial solidarity. That this solidarity is hardly in sight as yet, let alone within measurable distance of accomplishment, may be granted; but that it is a supreme necessity for labor in order to gain its ends is obvious.

Not till labor is organized on a revolutionary industrial basis shall we have the end of militant political Kaisers in Germany and militant industrial Kaisers like Rockefeller in Colorado. Until this solidarity is accomplished we shall see the earth periodically drenched in human blood shed by workingmen who will rise from International Socialist Peace Conventions and rush to die in the trenches of Czar and Kaiser and Presidents, slaughtering each other in blind patriotism.

HARRY KEMP'S COLLECTED POEMS

THE CRY OF YOUTH, by Harry Kemp. Published by Mitchell Kennerley, New York. $1.25 net.

KEMP'S poems breathe the spirit of revolt against current economic conditions. We see in them the high-spirited but unemployed American youth, imbued with the highest ideals, coming up plump against box-cars, hand-outs, brake-beams, county sheriffs, chain-gangs, and all the other pleasantries our free country offers the man out of a job. Young America, according to Kemp, has the option of a humdrum life of, say, employment selling ribbons behind the counter of a department store or of "seeing America first" by tramping across the continent, working at any old job offered, and when it isn't offered, then getting food any old way from begging to looting a freight.

The author chose the adventurous life, and his poems are the expression of his experiences. There is something sinuous in poetry. It visualizes things of which prose at best gives you but an obscure and faint impression, and thus Harry's work has an historical value as well as an aesthetic one.

Here is something from him on war, which is particularly apropos of the hour:

> I sing the song of the great clean guns that belch forth death at will.
> Ah, but the wailing mothers, the lifeless forms, and still!
> I sing the clash of bayonets and sabres that flash and cleave.
> And wilt thou sing the maimed ones, too, that go with pinned-up sleeve?

Harry has put me in an imperishable house of fame by dedicating this volume to Gaylord Wilshire.

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